



Episcopal Teacher

CENTER FOR THE MINISTRY OF TEACHING
SPRING 2012 ♦ VOL. 24, No. 3



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Finding Peace in God at the Center of the Storm

By now most of you have become aware of the Executive Council's proposed budget for the 2013-2015 Episcopal Church triennium, which reduces the Christian formation and vocations line item (all things children, youth, young adult, adult and older adult) from \$3 million to \$286,000. This 90 percent cut is explained as devolution or subsidiarization – the theory that in this extended season of economic strain, Christian formation is most effectively delivered and sustained at a more local level – province, diocese, or congregation.

Church-wide program cuts were anticipated in response to the continuing precipitous decline in membership and commensurate diminished voluntary giving by dioceses (optimistically estimated at 19 percent of diocesan budgets). The proposed budget virtually eliminates denominational staffing, resources, and programming for Christian formation. To make matters worse, the parish and diocesan structures from which Christian formation leadership is intended to devolve are themselves under severe stress. The aggregate number of staff layoffs far exceeds new hires as congregations and dioceses undergo "restructuring."

It is no wonder the budget news has sparked a firestorm of indignation and protest. People are talking, blogging, organizing, petitioning and, yes, even praying! Perhaps this is not all bad. Oscar Wilde once said, "the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about," and then there's always the popular (if debatable) adage, "any publicity is good publicity." Christian formation is certainly getting press.

While there is much amiss with the process and priorities revealed in the proposed budget, the outcome may yet be holy (see blog by Thomas Ferguson, Bexley Hall Seminary Dean, <http://crustyoldean.blogspot.com/>).

After over 30 years of hard, intentional work surrounding the baptismal covenant (inspired by the liturgical revisions of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer), the language and practices of faith formation across the life span are beginning to take hold.

The adoption of the Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation at General Convention 2009 was a strategic, if unfunded, victory. It yoked allies and advocates across the Church and is inspiring active collaborations and partnerships to embrace the Great Commission through evangelism and discipleship. Christian formation is no longer equated with Sunday School or formal programming in congregations. Christian formation is now understood by many to be the essential work of the Church. If we are not committed to a lifelong process of encountering and engaging the Gospel of Jesus Christ, what are we about? If we do not know what we believe, or how to practice what we believe faithfully, what difference does it make if the Episcopal Church survives or not?

It turns out that a poor budget has been released to a wiser, better networked, more agile, hyper-connected and serious Christian church. Voices from every corner are alarmed by a budget suggesting Episcopal mission will thrive without attention to the core work of making disciples. Unlike the Episcopal Church of the Charter that invites, inspires, and transforms, the Episcopal Church of the proposed budget appears to be competitive and unimaginative.

Ironically, the very outcry, indeed revolution, we are witnessing is the fruit of intentional, strategic work at the denominational level. My challenge to us all is to resist the temptation to defend what was and instead to look forward, building on what we know

best as educators whose ministries are grounded in relationship: incarnate love.

Let us lend vision, hope and courage to a church in crisis. Let us live as if we actually believe all things shall be well in Christ. Let us commit ourselves to the basics.

- 1) **Pray:** Double-down on spiritual practices; discern what is the will of God.
- 2) **Listen:** Be well informed, see the big picture in its historical context (see <https://buildingthecontinuum.wordpress.com/>).
- 3) **Act:** Make direct contact with bishops, General Convention deputies, and members of the Program, Budget and Finance Committee. Thank these people for their ministry to the greater Church and offer a specific example you have witnessed of growth in Christian faith inspired by engagement with the greater Episcopal Church.

When the General Convention is over – no matter the outcome – return to prayer. Remember that Jesus explicitly exhorts us not to worry, saying, "Desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)
—Lisa Kimball

General Convention Budget Process

According to Episcopal Church canons, the draft budget will be presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance (PB&F). It is responsible for recommending a final balanced budget for the triennium to the General Convention 2012 (GC12). The final budget reflects the will of GC12 following concurred action by the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops after extensive open hearings and information gathering meetings are paired with information gathered by PB&F.

The budget will be presented to GC12 on the sixth legislative day (July 10) in a joint session of both Houses and then considered separately in each House. The budget adopted by GC12 is used by the Episcopal Church for the next triennium, 2013-2015. It will fund the governance, mission and ministry work of the Episcopal Church, serving as a blueprint for mission.

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EVENTS Around the Country

April 11, 2012
Building the Future: Philanthropic, Alumni/ae, and Collaborative Relationships at Episcopal Early Childhood Education Programs
Virginia Theological Seminary
Alexandria, VA
episcopalschools.org/ecedah2012/

May 7-10, 2012
Children, Youth and a New Kind of Christianity
Calvary Baptist Church
Washington, DC
children-youth.com

June 11-15, 2012
Christian Formation Conference

June 17-22, 2012
Adults Who Work With Youth

August 27-30, 2012
Nuevo Amanecer [New Dawn]
Kanuga Conferences Inc.
Hendersonville, NC
www.kanuga.org

October 15-18, 2012
Grow Up in Every Way — Healthy in God, Robust in Love
Western Christian Education Conference
Zephyr Point Conference Center
Lake Tahoe, NV
<http://westernceconf.org/>



NAECED Changes Name to Forma

The recently adopted Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation communicates a church-wide understanding that Christian formation is a journey throughout each person's life that occurs in diverse contexts. With nearly 400 members, the National Association for Episcopal Christian Education Directors (NAECED) reflects this understanding in its membership and an ever-expanding diversity of Christian educators across formation networks.

Leading up to its 2012 Tapestry Conference, the NAECED board of directors agreed that a name that speaks to the organization's broader identity was needed. The new name approved by the membership is **Forma**.

The word *forma* derives from the Latin verb *formare*, meaning "to form or to shape." The new name reflects the organization's partnership with those in the Christian faith responsible for forming God's people. The phrase "Partnering to Inspire Christian Formation" in the new logo identifies the association as a group of individuals that is committed to the ministry of Christian formation. Each member brings unique gifts and knowledge to share with others.

At the conference, Lyle SmithGraybeal was elected as the new Forma board president. He is a volunteer adult educator and youth leader at St. Brigit Episcopal Church, Frederick, Colorado. Since 1998 he has worked with Renovaré, a renewal ministry founded by *Celebration*



of Discipline author Richard J. Foster. At Renovaré he organizes events, works with authors, oversees websites, consults with international expressions (sister organizations), and is a contributor with Felicia, his spouse, to *The Life with God Bible* (Wisdom of Solomon).

Members of Forma are partnering with all those involved in formation and education. Together they can help The Episcopal Church and her individual members live into the call to be formed as disciples of Christ.

— Kyle SmithGraybeal

Other Forma Officers

Vice-President: Wendy Claire Barrie
Diocese of New York

Secretary: Victoria L. Garvey
Diocese of Chicago

Financial Secretary/Membership: Laurie Bailey
Diocese of Louisiana

New Board Members

Randall Curtis
Diocese of Arkansas

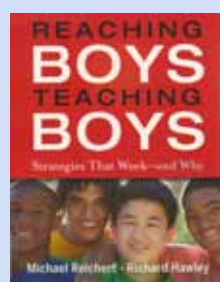
Patricia S. Mitchell
Diocese of New York

Lisa Puccio
Diocese of Texas

Kathy Graham
Diocese of Alabama

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

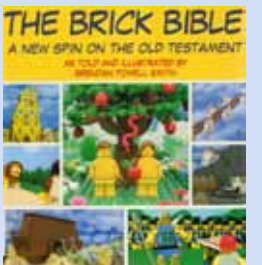
FROM KEY HALL



Reichert, Michael and Hawley, Richard. *Reaching Boys, Teaching Boys: Strategies that Work—and Why*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010. Real-world teaching techniques that have proven effective with male students complemented by 100 detailed examples of classroom activities.

Wright, N. T. *Christian Letters for Everyone: James, Peter, John and Judah [Jude]*. Louisville: John Knox Presbyterian Press, 2011. Part of the *New Testament for Everyone* series, this volume explore the general or catholic epistles. Readable prose with the latest biblical scholarship ties into today's culture. For Bible study, personal use, and teaching.

Smith, Brendan Powell. *The Brick Bible: A New Spin on the Old Testament*. Skyhorse Publishing, 2011. The Hebrew scripture told through creative Lego® constructions.



Pagitt, Doug and Prill, Kathryn. *Body Prayer: The Posture of Intimacy with God*. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2005. A gentle guide to pray with the whole self to open more fully to God. Illustrated with images to help people connect to God in new ways.

On the Internet

Free resources for Christian formation are widely available, but usually at a cost. The cost is not necessarily from hidden fees or add-ons, but in time. Rarely can educators download materials without a careful vetting of a site's theology and educational philosophy. Even after passing those tests, resources still must be adapted for specific groups and congregations.

Episcopal Teacher will be identifying resources on the web for you to consider. We also encourage you to go to our pages on the Virginia Theological Seminary website at www.vts.edu/cmt for a variety of resources. The Digital Missioner & Learning Lab Coordinator, a new position at the Center for the Ministry of Teaching soon to be filled, will be available to assist educators with questions about online resources.

Resources for Women's Groups
www.womenoftheelca.org

This website, targeted to women in the Lutheran Church, includes free, downloadable resources. In addition to featured materials, the archive has Bible studies and seasonal offerings, among other resources.

Curriculum for All
www.episcopalchurch.org/lesson-plans

Designed to follow the Revised Common Lectionary, these lesson plans use practical approaches to meet the needs of volunteer teachers. Lesson plans for young children, older children, and adults are offered each week; intergenerational lessons are available for many major feast days.



Celebrate Day of Pentecost at Church & Home

Pentecost is the celebration of the presence of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus' friends gathered together in fear and doubt as told in Acts 2, they received the Spirit. Citing the prophesy of Joel, Peter promised that "your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

Paul later wrote in his letter to the Romans that "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." (Romans 5:5) On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit appeared "like the rush of a violent wind" and as divided tongues of fire.

As Jesus' friend gathered that day, the breath of God filled the house and their being, moving them outward into the world with Christ's message of hope and redemption.

Just as heat does not stay bottled up in one place, nor will "good news." On fire with God's love, the people who gathered in that house on Pentecost went out into the world, telling the story of God's presence in their lives.

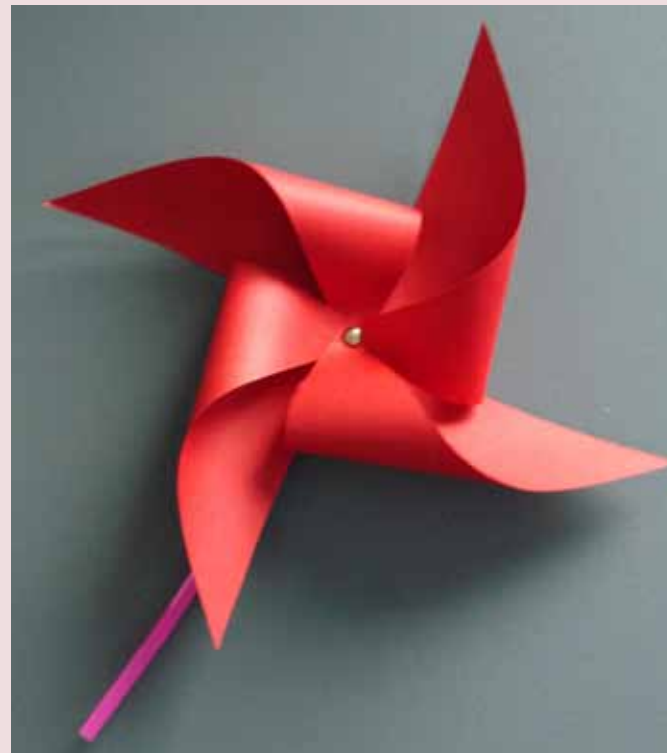
Activities for Children & Families

Children learn about God's love through concrete activities. Feeling wind blow on their faces or watching it move the limbs of trees helps them understand the power of a force that cannot be seen.

Begin by talking about the power and mystery of wind. Early in his ministry Jesus said to Nicodemus, "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the

sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes" (John 3:8). Ask the children wondering questions to help them think about wind—how it can be both pleasant and fierce.

Make paper wind wheels with red construction paper, the liturgical color of the Day of Pentecost in the Church. Begin with 8-inch square pieces of paper. Cut from the corners toward, but not all the way to the center. Punch holes in every other corner. Take the corners with holes and fold them over (without creasing) toward the center. Over-



lap the ends, lining up the hole punches. Also punch a hole at one end of a soda straw. Place a paper brad through the holes and fasten to the straw.

If weather permits, go outside to try out the pinwheels by running and moving it quickly through the air. This can also be done in a classroom with arm movements. Consider making the pinwheels before the worship service and inviting children to process in waving their creations in the air.

At Home

Families can make wind chimes to remind them of that the power of God is everywhere—at church, at home, at school, and in their communities. Gather a variety of items to make different sounds, such as nails of various sizes, shells, or any small object that makes sound. Using strong thread or string, tie the objects to a twig or section of bamboo.

Another symbol for the Holy Spirit is a dove (*Matthew 3:13-17, John 14:22-26, I Corinthians 12:4-11*). Make a Holy Spirit tree (similar to a Jesse Tree) using symbols for the Holy Spirit. Put a small tree branch into a pot filled with small stones or gravel to hold the branch in place. Make doves by folding paper, finding images on the internet, or using the photo from this article.

Create flames, also a symbol of Pentecost, by making a collage with red, orange and yellow paper, using finger paint, cutting pictures from magazines, or printing images from the internet. Decorate the branch by hanging the symbols of wind, fire and doves with red yarn as a reminder that red is also associated with Pentecost.

As children celebrate Pentecost at church and at home, encourage them to thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Remind them that the Holy Spirit is always with them, no matter where they go.

Elaine Ward





Rita Mosquito

Joining the Fight Against Malaria

By Cynthia Coe

In addition to the *Abundant Life Garden Project*, Episcopal Relief & Development offers Christian formation through its *NetsforLife® Rita Mosquito* programs for children and youth. With these free downloadable resources Episcopal Relief & Development supports congregations in serving others in all parts of the world.

In line with promoting good health for children and all people worldwide, children in Episcopal parishes and schools can use the *NetsforLife®* curriculum materials to zero in on the fight against malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa. The “Real Heroes versus Rita Mosquito” resources bring this issue alive for children and youth.

One child dies each minute from malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa. This disease is preventable through community training and education, the use of long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets, and on-going monitoring and evaluation of net use.

Rita Mosquito programs are designed for children in elementary and middle school; *Act Out* materials are for youth; a study guide and a series of online videos and narrated slideshows are available for adults.

The curriculum aligns with the *NetsforLife®* Inspiration Fund, a grassroots effort to educate, engage, and unite Episcopalians in support of the Millennium Development Goals. The goal is to build awareness about malaria and its prevention, while raising \$5 million by the end of 2012.

Rita Mosquito

A cartoon character, “Rita Mosquito,” introduces the topic of malaria prevention in a child-friendly way. She is thwarted in her efforts to spread her “baggage” of malaria parasites by the use of “force fields” – long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets. Children are encouraged to be “Real Heroes” by participating in the fight against malaria.

There are three modules of the Rita Mosquito materials. Each module contains a full lesson plan for three “rotations” of Vacation Bible School or school use. The program can also be adapted to Sunday morning or parish weeknight or retreat use. The materials are based on the premise that before people can “seek and serve” others in Christ, they need to learn about where and how others live.

Each of the modules includes an opening activity, presentation materials, a game that provides experiential learning, arts and crafts activities, and a closing activity. Lesson plans are supplemented with a

rich source of downloadable teaching resources, such as name badges, illustrations, fact sheets, snack and song suggestions. Presentations to children can be made by reading a free downloadable storybook (with illustrations and photographs), by using “Talking Points” lesson notes, or by showing one or more online videos.

“Episcopal Relief & Development is pleased to offer the Rita Mosquito curriculum to young people to strengthen and deepen their faith while finding meaningful ways to live it out through our malaria prevention work,” says Joy Shigaki, director of the *NetsforLife®* Inspiration Fund. “Who wouldn’t want to learn about



Photo by Mike Dubose for Episcopal Relief & Development

Malaria

malaria from Rita the Mosquito? She provides a fun way to enrich their spiritual lives while learning about the causes of malaria, and what they can do to fight it.”

After presenting basic information about the disease in the first module, teachers may use a non-competitive game to help children experience how the disease is transmitted. Crafts for young children include a mosquito mask they may use to drink juice during snack time (cranberry or another red juice is recommended).

The second module of the materials, “Rita Mosquito Zeroes in on Africa,” focuses on the geography of sub-Saharan Africa, with special emphasis on four countries – Zambia, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Liberia. A puzzle map of Africa is included with the curriculum, along with concise fact sheets about these countries.

The third module, “The Truth about Rita Mosquito,” focuses on scientific facts about malaria, the approach to malaria prevention, and the power of truth in fighting and eliminating disease. Young people learn that before they can effectively fight disease — or any other challenge in their lives — they need to understand the facts about the causes of a problem and how to address them.

A primary objective of all the module is for young people to identify ways they can help with malaria



Photo by Brian Winter for Episcopal Relief & Development

prevention. This assistance can take the form of being aware of serious challenges facing people in other parts of the world, making a donation to *NetsforLife®*, telling their communities about malaria prevention, or praying for the needs of others.

Links:

All children’s materials:

www.er-d.org/children

Youth materials:

www.er-d.org/youth

NetsforLife® materials:

<http://www.inspirationfund.org/>

[volunteer-center/curriculum-resources](http://www.volunteer-center/curriculum-resources)

Soon to be Released from Episcopal Relief & Development

An adult series on disaster preparedness, pastoral care in response to disasters, and the theological basis of disaster response is under development. A Vacation Bible School curriculum for children on preparing for and responding to unexpected events in their lives will also soon be available. A one-hour introductory workshop for adults about disaster relief will be released in early 2012, with additional materials for a retreat/ workshop series coming soon. Go to <http://www.er-d.org/resourcelibrary>.

A number of *Act Out* retreat materials for youth that focus on clean water and sanitation, malaria prevention, and hunger and economic opportunities can be downloaded at <http://www.er-d.org/youth>. Devotionals for youth involved in summer mission trips will be available soon.

Spiritual Vitality After 70



Editor's Note: This is Part 1 of three about remaining spiritually vital throughout the aging process. This article includes general information about the growing number of elders in the world and in our churches. Part 2 will look at developmental issues around aging; Part 3 will suggest programming options. The series comes from a workshop at Virginia Theological Seminary led by Dr. Lisa Kimball and Dorothy Linthicum in November 2011. To download additional resources on this topic, go to www.vts.edu/cmt/resources.

By Dorothy Linthicum

"*Growing Old* may sound like an oxymoron: two words that don't belong together. As a culture we are far more likely to associate aging with decline rather than growth," notes a blogger in the Northeast Forum on Spirituality and Aging. The writer cites the words of Paul in II Corinthians 4 who reminds us that "we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us."

Aging is an anathema in our culture, associated with decline rather than growth—except in numbers. From childhood, we've valued our ability to do things ourselves. The decline of our physical bodies may leave us feeling powerless—sad, angry, and afraid.

But that is not the last word. Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians that in the midst of decline, "our inner nature is being renewed day by day." Although "we are afflicted in every way," says Paul, we are "not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."

The writer in the forum believes that community is essential for spiritual resiliency. After "being knocked down and stunned by events," the writer says, "finding a hand of comfort, support, and encouragement assists us in once again rising."

Growing Older in America

Look around most congregations for first-hand evidence of the graying of America: more than one in three Episcopalians is over the age of 65. This phenomenon is a reality for many places throughout the world. We are living longer and better. Changes related to aging in our bodies, minds and souls require us to forge new ways of thinking about living lives of meaning. We need to engage in critical conversations about who, what and where we are for the sake of our older adults and our church.

Increasingly in the literature about aging and human experience, "*young old age*" refers roughly to people in their 60s and 70s when most are as hardy as they were in middle age; "*old old age*" then refers roughly to the experience of people in their 80s and 90s when most are radically different than they were, not only in middle age, but also in their "*young old age*."

Lumping together 65, 75, and 85 year olds for statistics regarding their physiological and psychological condition makes as much sense as lumping together 5-, 15-, and 25-year-olds for statistics about the young. For example, based on the misleading statistical practice of lumping disparate age groups, only 5 percent of the over-65 age group are confined to nursing homes. The likelihood, however, of spending time in a nursing home jumps to 50 percent in the 85+ age group. (Jacoby, 11-12)

By the Numbers

While it is important to remember that "lived" experience matters more than statistical analyses, it is helpful to understand what the numbers tell us. Never before in human history has our planet contained so many older people — or such a large percentage of them. Throughout the world today, there are more people aged 65 and older than the entire populations of Russia, Japan, France, Germany and Australia—combined. The United States contains more people age 65 and older than the *total* population of Canada. (Pirkl)

The world's population is growing—and aging. Very low birth rates in developed countries, coupled with birth rate declines in most developing countries, are projected to increase the population ages 65 and over to the point in 2050 when it will be 2.5 times that of the population ages 0-4. This is an exact reversal of the situation in 1950. (Pirkl)

This dramatic growth in numbers and proportions, increased life expectancies, and energetic life styles, now enables people to live 20 to 25 percent of their lives in active retirement. Moreover, today's physically and intellectually active younger generations predict that tomorrow's elderly population will be better educated, healthier, culturally literate and, as individuals, more discerning consumers.

Wealth Gap

The age-based wealth gap today is unprecedented. In 2009, the median net worth (all assets minus all debts) of households headed by an adult ages 65 or older was 42 percent more than that of their same-aged counterparts in 1984. By contrast, the net worth of a typical household headed by an adult under the age of 35 in 2009 was 68 percent less than that of their counterparts in 1984. (Pew Research Center)

People generally accumulate wealth as they age, so it is not unusual to find large age-based gaps on this measure. However, the current gap is unprecedented. In 1984, the age-based wealth gap was 10:1. By 2009, it ballooned to 47:1. This reflects more than recent economic issues; trends are decades old and reflect changes in the labor and housing markets, delayed marriage, delayed retirement, and the changing racial and ethnic composition of the population.

Meeting the Challenge

"There is one form of experience that belongs only to those who are old — that of old age itself. The young have only vague and erroneous notions of it."

—Simone de Beauvoir

What are the implications of these trends for the Church? For the spirituality of older Americans?

- Older adults are for the most part active, healthy, and capable of making significant contributions for the Kingdom of God.
- We must let go of any notion of a "one-size-fits-all" ministry.
- We should expect and nurture the spiritual growth of people over 70, at the same time honoring and harnessing their unique gifts for ministry.

Maybe most important, we need to listen. By listening we may change our "vague and erroneous notions" of old age to enter into the "experience that belongs only to those who are old."

References

- Growing Old*, in Column: Spirituality and Aging, Northeast Forum on Spirituality and Aging, October 3, 2008.
- Jacoby, S. (2011). *Never say die: The myth of the new old age*. New York: Vintage.
- Pew Research Center, Social and Demographic Trends, The Rising Age Gap in Economic Well-Being. <http://www.pewsocial-trends.org/files/2011/11/WealthReportFINAL.pdf>
- Pirkl, James. "Demographics of Aging," transgenerational.org. <http://transgenerational.org/aging/demographics.htm>.
- de Beauvoir, S. (1996) *The Coming of Age*, trans. by Patrick O'Brian, 381.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Operation Overboard:

Dare to Go Deep with God!

Cokesbury/Abingdon Press

800-672-1789

<http://overboard.cokesburyvbs.com/>

Cost: \$89.99 (Smaller Church Starter Pack: \$59.99)

Operation Overboard: Dare to Go Deep with God challenges children to dive into “the water of God’s Word and discover what it means to have deep faith.” As children don imaginary scuba gear and spend the week journeying down towards the oceans floor in an “underwater adventure” they will also delve into the Bible, meeting Biblical characters from both the Old and New Testaments who showed “deep” faith in God. *Operation Overboard* strives to introduce children to a deeper relationship with God through Jesus Christ, inspiring them to bring alive the word of God in their lives. The rotation model offers a sequential view of the Bible, providing faith connections for everyone involved. The central goal for participants of all ages is to understand the meaning of their faith and how to share it with others.

Strengths:

- Heavy emphasis on the unconditional love of God.
- Illustrations and photographs are inclusive and multi-racial.
- Mission stories highlight children who make a difference and focus on the ocean and clean water.
- Supports a custom church web site and registration.
- Interactive Bible stories and prayer.
- Life application activities connect the Bible stories and “ocean insights” to daily life.
- Sign language instructions are included for Bible verses.
- Offers a less expensive starter kit for small churches.
- Crafts time includes a “faith connection” to tie in projects with a daily theme.
- Music is lively with lyrics that children will enjoy singing.

Weaknesses:

- Challenges children to tell everyone they know about Jesus, which has the potential to make some children feel uncomfortable.
- Costly add-on materials prohibitive to some churches.

Lori Daniels

Adventures on Promise Island:

Where Kids Discover God’s Lifesaving Love!

Standard Publishing

800.543.1353

vacationbibleschool.com

Starter Kit: \$69.99

Promise Island, a five-session Vacation Bible School program with a tropical island theme, focuses on God’s promise to always be present. Each session allows leaders to find a balance between activity and reflection, providing opportunities for games, crafts, singing, drama, and service. *Promise Island* also includes resources for event planning and actual teaching. Music is written and performed by contemporary Christian musician Yancy.

Strengths:

- While sin is mentioned, the message of God’s love has prime importance.
- Memorization of Bible passages is encouraged.
- Scriptural lessons extend to adult Bible study allowing parents to engage with the material and share formation experiences with their child.
- Quick Start Guide gives clear directions on how to sort through the materials and get to what is needed quickly.
- Music, written and performed by Christian musician Yancy, is lively and inviting.
- Images and music videos are inclusive in their use of children from different culture and backgrounds.

Weaknesses:

- Overemphasizes physical materials needed to support the program.
- Expenses can quickly build.
- More extensive information about developmental milestones of children would be helpful.

Nina Bacas

2012 TOP PICKS



Babylon: Daniel’s Courage in Captivity

Group Publishing

800-447-1070

group.com/childrens-ministry/vbs/Babylon

Cost: \$124.99

Babylon, the next generation of the Marketplace series, focuses on Daniel during his captivity in Babylon. The overall emphasis of the program is staying true to God, just as Daniel and his friends refused to denounce God. Children and adults are challenged throughout the week to share their beliefs about God with shopkeepers in the Marketplace among others. Central to the program are the Marketplace Shops, where participants create craft projects, learn about animals and plants of the time, and enjoy foods of the Middle East. Decorating, especially for the marketplace, can be very demanding and requires significant volunteer time. Online support for a parish VBS website and registration are available.

Strengths:

- Volunteers are supported with resource materials.
- The Marketplace series has a proven track record of being a varied, interesting program.
- Music is engaging, supported with DVD tracks using multi-culture and multi-age singers. Music disks include lyrics and instrumental only versions.
- Mission project focuses on raising money for mosquito nets for Mali in Western Africa; participants are encouraged to send cards to net recipients and pray for them daily.

Weaknesses:

- Although advertised as intergenerational, activities are targeted to children. Youth could provide valuable assistance in decorating the Marketplace and co-leading tribes with adults.
- Snack suggestions are vague; instructions to the shopkeeper include grapes, dried fruit, cheeses, figs, olives, leavened and unleavened bread.
- Designing crafts to be made in the Marketplace can be very time consuming unless pre-packaged kits are purchased, which may be costly. (For example, 10 “hanging garden” kits cost \$14.99.)

Dorothy Linthicum

Take Me to the Water: God’s Love Flows

MennoMedia Faith & Life Resources,

800-245-7894

MennoMedia.org/vbs

Cost \$134.99

Take Me to the Water focuses on five Bible texts from the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament that use water to illustrate God’s provision of life and blessing. The five-day program is designed to help children understand their faith as they explore the use of water through biblical stories. The lessons acknowledge the importance of water to life, but also emphasize that God is the source of life who sustains us today. The overall message of the curriculum is gentle and positive. Children will also be exposed to water issues around the world today.

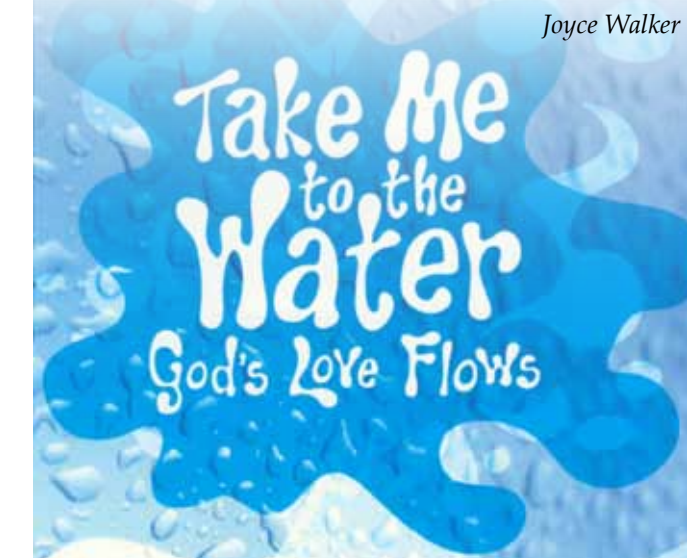
Strengths:

- Good immersion into the daily Bible story. Crafts are appropriate to the text.
- Easy-to-use for volunteer who are not teachers.
- Little to purchase aside from the Starter Kit, a help for limited church budgets. Optional posters are \$4.49 each, and other materials can be accessed online.

Weaknesses:

- Most of the music is unremarkable, though easy to sing.
- Snack recipes do not seem sensitive to common allergies in young children.
- The age-span from first to eighth grade is quite wide, probably requiring supplemental activities for older children.

Joyce Walker



¡Escuela Bíblica de Vacaciones!

RECURSOS EN ESPAÑOL



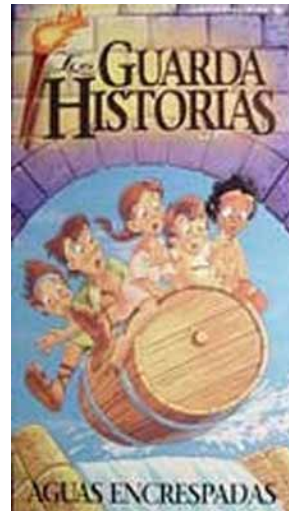
Maravillas increíbles de la aviación

LifeWay
800-968-5519
www.lifeway.com
Cost: \$69.99

La aviación asombrosa Maravillas es una rotación currículo con tema de aviación que conduce los participantes en un tour de las maravillas de la creación de Dios. El plan de estudios con el material para los más pequeños a través de los adultos, con guía de libros separados para cada edad. Diariamente la escritura conecta estudio de la Biblia a la artesanía, la música y las actividades recreativas que se ven reforzados por el culto y tiempos de respuesta activa.

Incluye manuales para los líderes y para los alumnos, recursos para la planificación, ayudas de promoción, música y mucho más.

Guarda Historias:
Una serie animada de video cristiana
Shepherd Studios (Ireland)
www.leaderresouces.org
(distributor)
800-941-2218
Cost: \$179 + shipping



Guarda Historias del Kit de Recursos, el nuevo DVD con kits educación cristiana con las dos pistas de idioma Inglés y español, ya está disponible. Estos nuevos kits ofrecen 4 DVDs, cada uno de los episodios que abarca 3 o 4, y con pausas que permitan a los profesores el acceso directo a las 46 parábolas e historias de Jesús, en Inglés y Español.

¡Agua Limpia para Todos los Hijos de Dios!
Synod of Living Waters, Presbyterian Church USA
615.261.4008
www.livingwatersfortheworld.org
Cost: \$34.00 (Bilingual/Spanish)

Un proyecto de misión del Sínodo de aguas vivas, agua limpia para todos los hijos de Dios ayuda a los niños a comprender la importancia del agua potable, y cómo tomar agua potable a todos los niños del mundo. Diseñado como de bajo costo, pensativo curriculum, todos los materiales pueden ser duplicados para una iglesia de VBS programa.



Campeones de la fe
Concordia Publishing House
800.325.3040
<http://vbs.cph.org/2012/index.asp>
Cost: \$54.99 español
\$59.99 bilingual

Un grupo de atletas participa en los juegos olímpicos internacionales y cada día enfrenta nuevos desafíos. Enfrentamos dificultades cada día, y no debemos desalentarnos por los resultados. Con Jesucristo podemos continuar nuestra carrera con ánimo y perseverancia hasta el final y lograr llegar a la meta.

Campeones de la fe es disponible en español y español/inglés, escrito originalmente en español. El material es flexible en cuanto a tiempo y a la cantidad de voluntarios.



Vacation Bible School

Reviews

From the Center of the Ministry of Teaching
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e-Formation Learning Exchange



e = all things electronic, digital, technology

formation = an act of giving form or shape

learning = an act, process or experience of gaining knowledge or skill

exchange = an act of giving and receiving



June 10 - 12, 2012

Virginia Theological Seminary

3737 Seminary Road

Alexandria, VA 22304

www.vts.edu/icfl/registration

This two-day event is for Christian leaders, professional or volunteer, to expand their knowledge of and confidence in technology to nurture spiritual formation, learning to engage a world in continual change. Tradition will inform imagination. Collaboration will redefine expertise.